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For Immediate Release:  
July 14, 2010  
Release No.: 10-18

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## **Regional Team meets in St. Louis to continue flood damage reduction work**

**July 14, St. Louis** – The Nation's first-ever Regional Flood Risk Management Team (RFRMT) will meet in St. Louis July 15 to discuss the unseasonably high water levels from consistently heavy rains throughout the Upper Mississippi River watershed.

The RFRMT is historic both in purpose and composition. It is now fully chartered with signatory members from five states, including senior flood risk management officials from Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin. Other members include senior leaders from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Geological Survey, National Resource Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Weather Service.

The RFRMT is currently directed by a 3-member leadership committee that includes Maj. Gen. Michael Walsh, Commander, USACE Mississippi Valley Division (MVD), Mr. Gary Clark, Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Bob Bissell, FEMA Region VII. The RFRMT's overall purpose is to assist federal, tribal, state, and local governmental partners to coordinate, communicate and collaborate on flood risk management initiatives within the Upper Mississippi River basin.

The RFRMT is working on ideas to integrate pre-flood mitigation with a long-term strategy to plan and implement pre-and post-flood emergency actions to reduce regional flood risks this coming spring and in the future. The RFRMT framework ensures that important disaster planning and dialog occurs before a flood event. For example, the quarterly meetings allow member states to discuss immediate and long range plans for flood risk reduction within their jurisdictions.

The team's prime goal is to minimize risk to life, property, and agriculture, while also protecting natural resources in a reasonable and cost-effective manner. Additional RFRMT goals include implementing flood risk and watershed management programs and activities that complement existing mitigation activities. The team is striving to ensure that flood risk reduction initiatives encompass federal, tribal, state, and local programs and authorities in an inclusive or systemic approach.

The RFRMT's goals also include considering both potential Structural Alternatives and Non-Structural Alternatives (NSAs) in all future planning to reduce flood risks and potential losses region wide.

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